

Message Text

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ACTION EB-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-10 ISO-00 COME-00 TRSE-00 INT-05
OES-09 GSA-02 STR-07 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 OMB-01
SP-02 /067 W
-----050263 031208Z /45

R 021630Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5626
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY TOKYO

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: EMIN
SUBJECT: POSSIBLE NICKEL DIALOGUE

REF: STATE 183006

1. EMBASSY CONTACTED CHRISTIAN OQUET, MINERAL SPECIALIST IN FOREIGN MINISTRY, TO TRANSMIT INFORMALLY USG POSITION ON AUSTRALIAN INITIATIVE INCLUDED REFTEL. OQUET INDICATED AUSTRALIANS HAD ORALLY DISCUSSED ISSUE WITH GOF BUT HAD NOT SUBMITTED WRITTEN PROPOSAL. ACCORDING OQUET, GOF DOES NOT CONSIDER NICKEL TO BE PRESSING RAW MATERIAL PROBLEM AT PRESENT BUT WOULD NOT BE HOSTILE TO INTERNATIONAL DISCUSSION GROUP FOCUSED ON STATISTICAL AND INVESTMENT DATA. GOF SEES NO NEED FOR GOVERNMENT INTERVENTION IN NICKEL MARKET AT THIS TIME.

2. RELAXED FRENCH ATTITUDE TOWARD NICKEL RESULTS FROM AVAILABILITY OF NEW CALEDONIAN PRODUCTION TO MEET ANTICIPATED FRENCH NEEDS AND PRESENTLY LIMITED LDC PRODUCTION.
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DUCTION ROLE. NEW CALEDONIAN NICKEL SALES TO THIRD COUNTRIES, LARGELY TO JAPAN, MAKE FRANCE A NET NICKEL EXPORTER. EXISTING NICKEL RESERVES IN NEW CALEDONIA BELIEVED SUFFICIENT TO MEET FRENCH REQUIREMENTS AT LEAST THROUGH 1980'S. SOME FRENCH MINERAL EXPERTS, HOWEVER, HAVE EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT PRESENTLY DEPRESSED NICKEL PRICES MAY RETARD PLANNED INVESTMENT IN NEW CALEDONIAN

NICKEL AND LEAD TO SOME SUPPLY SHORTFALL AND PRESSURE
ON PRICES AROUND 1985. THESE SAME EXPERTS ALSO CONCERNED
ABOUT POSSIBLE FUTURE IMPACT OF DEEP SEABED NICKEL
MINING ON ECONOMIC VIABILITY OF NEW CALEDONIAN MINES.

3. GENERAL GOF POLITICAL INTEREST IN MARKET INTERVENTION
TO SUPPORT PRICES FOR LDC RAW MATERIAL PRODUCTION DOES
NOT EXTEND TO NICKEL AT THIS TIME GIVEN PREDOMINANT
ROLE OF DC NICKEL PRODUCERS AND NON-INCLUSION OF NICKEL
ON UNCTAD LIST. GOF BELIEVES, HOWEVER, THAT PROJECTED
SOUTH-EAST ASIAN NICKEL PRODUCTION, PARTICULARLY IN
INDONESIA, MAY EVENTUALLY LEAD TO INCREASED LDC INTEREST
IN REGULATING NICKEL PRICES.

HARTMAN

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: NICKEL
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 02 aug 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978PARIS24246
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780318-0146
Format: TEL
From: PARIS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t197808107/aaaadlsv.tel
Line Count: 76
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 7d038b58-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EB
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 STATE 183006
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1560876
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: POSSIBLE NICKEL DIALOGUE
TAGS: EMIN
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/7d038b58-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014